

Inclusive recruitment & objective selection

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Human Centric



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Introduction

Recruiting and selecting the right candidate is one of the most impactful and complex tasks for an organisation. Whether it's assembling a team, strengthening a department, or realising a strategy, recruitment and selection are often decisive for the ultimate success. At the same time, there are many pitfalls: biases, vague criteria, and limited recruitment channels often stand in the way of finding the best talent and making fair decisions.

Fortunately, there are many practical methods to make the process more inclusive, objective, and effective. The question is: how do you do that in practice?

In this introduction, we will guide you through the key steps and choices in the recruitment and selection process. You will gain insight into how you, as a selection committee, HR professional, or manager, can enhance inclusion and objectivity without compromising on quality. This introduction is primarily written for selection committees within healthcare institutions, universities, and government agencies, but the principles are widely applicable.

We answer the following questions, among others:

- What is inclusive recruitment and objective selection, and why is it important?
- What pitfalls should you be aware of?
- How can you make more conscious and fair choices at each stage of the process?
 - **Step 1: Committee & profile:** Who are we looking for? What profile and competencies are essential?
 - **Step 2: Vacancy & recruitment:** How do we attract qualified candidates?
 - **Step 3: Getting to know candidates:** What information do we need to make a good assessment? And how do we gather it?
 - **Step 4: Weighing & selecting:** How do we evaluate the information and choose the best candidate?
 - **Step 5: Evaluating:** How do we reflect on the process and learn from it?
- How do you move from 'objective' to 'just'?
- Where can you find in-depth resources and tools?

In this introduction, you will find practical tools, formats, and checklists that are often directly usable and sometimes require a bit more work. The goal is to support you and your colleagues in making conscious, transparent, and well-founded decisions. Which tools you use depends on your context and possibilities.

Why inclusive recruitment and objective selection?

Selecting the right candidate is crucial for the success of a team or organisation. A mismatch between candidate and position not only costs money (e.g., direct costs of the recruitment process) but also leads to productivity loss and frustration among colleagues. The total impact can amount to tens of thousands of euros per wrong appointment. Additionally, you want to ensure equal opportunities and prevent discrimination. This is not only legally required but also prevents you from missing out on valuable talent. With this introduction, training, and practical support, we help you optimise your recruitment and selection process.

What is inclusive recruitment and objective selection

You only find the right candidate if they apply. Inclusive recruitment means actively reaching out to a broad and diverse group of potential candidates. You do this with accessible, target group-oriented job descriptions, distributed through appropriate channels, so that your message truly gets across.

Objective selection means that the committee makes systematic and rational choices. This is achieved by using clear selection criteria and reliable assessment instruments. Structured interviews, scoring lists, and reliable assessment instruments reduce the influence of unconscious biases, groupthink, and arbitrariness.

Traditional CVs and open interviews seem fair, but research shows that personal preferences and unconscious biases often play a role, influencing selection outcomes. Studies show that candidates with a non-Western migration background find the traditional CV less fair and often experience adverse outcomes. Objective recruitment and selection are perceived as fairer by all groups in terms of consistency and equal treatment. Research on candidates' opinions showed that they rate organisations with such procedures more positively and are more likely to recommend them to others. Thus, objective methods improve both equal opportunities and the candidate experience.

READ MORE: research into the outcomes for CV's of (non-western) candidates ([open](#); Dutch) and the rating of organisations with objective selection ([open](#); Dutch)

Why are inclusive recruitment and a diverse workforce valuable?

Diversity enriches teams. Different backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives ensure that issues are viewed from multiple angles. This prevents one-sided thinking and leads to better-considered decisions. Teams that resemble the diversity of their target group understand that target group better and can develop policies, products, or services that better align.

A concrete example from healthcare: in the palliative phase, a patient may have specific wishes based on their faith or worldview. A diverse team, with knowledge of various cultural and spiritual traditions, can better understand and incorporate these wishes into the care plan. This creates opportunities to provide care that also meets the patient's needs.

Pitfalls to be aware of

Recruitment and selection processes are often undermined by cognitive biases and prejudices. The table below lists 15 common pitfalls. Each of these affects the quality and fairness of decision-making in selection procedures. The interventions and advice in this document are aimed at recognising and mitigating these effects.

TIP: Use this list as a self-scan for each recruitment and selection procedure. Do you recognise any of these biases in your process? Adjust accordingly.

Pitfall	Description	Impact
Gender-coded language	Job descriptions with terms like "strong" or "competitive" may appeal less to women.	Fewer applications from women, unequal assessment.
Excessive or irrelevant job requirements	Long lists of non-essential requirements discourage underrepresented groups.	Increased chance of exclusion; subjective selection.
Age bias	Terms like "young team" or high experience requirements imply unwanted age limits.	Older or younger candidates feel excluded.
Lack of representation	Visuals show only a homogeneous group, e.g., white men.	Candidates who do not resemble the homogeneous group do not feel addressed or welcome.
Network/referral bias	Recruiting through existing networks often leads to more of the same.	Missed opportunities for new and diverse perspectives.
Name and ethnicity bias	Candidates with a migration background are disadvantaged based on name or origin.	Discrimination based on origin; unequal opportunities.
Similarity/affinity bias	Candidates who resemble the assessor are favoured.	Assessment based on similarity rather than suitability; less diversity.
Halo and horn effect	One (positive or negative) aspect overshadows the rest of the assessment.	Incomplete or distorted evaluation of competencies.
Confirmation bias	Seeking confirmation of a first impression instead of open evaluation.	Limits objective assessment and discovery of new information.
Stereotyping & gender bias	Judging based on group characteristics rather than the individual.	Exclusion of talent based on assumptions.
Groupthink & authority bias	Committee members follow the dominant opinion or leader.	Less independent opinion formation; risk of tunnel vision.
Culture fit bias	Subjective click or 'fitting in with the team' weighs too heavily.	'Being different' is penalised; opportunities for innovation missed.
Recency/order bias	Last spoken candidates are better remembered than earlier ones.	Distorted memory influences assessment.
Contrast bias	Candidates are compared to each other rather than to the job profile.	Incomparable strengths/weaknesses become decisive.
Beauty bias	Physical appearance influences the perception of competence.	Subjective preference; no relation to job performance.

Step 1: Forming the committee and profile

1a. Designing the selection process

A good selection process starts with answering five core questions:

- Who are we looking for? What profile and competencies are essential?
- How do we attract qualified candidates?
- What information do we need to make a good assessment? And how do we gather it?
- How do we evaluate the information and choose the best candidate?
- How do we reflect on the process and learn from it?

Design the entire recruitment and selection process in advance based on these questions. How you apply this in practice is explained in the rest of this introduction.

Note: We describe the process chronologically, but there are things in steps 2 to 5 that belong in the preparation. Think of creating interview questions, assessment models, and score forms.

1b. Forming the selection committee

Form a selection committee as early as possible with diverse perspectives and backgrounds. HR can assist in the composition. It is crucial that all committee members commit to an inclusive and objective selection process. This requires awareness of one's own (unconscious) biases and sufficient knowledge of the process.

Ensure that the committee has a shared and explicit view of the desired profile. In practice, committee members often have different (implicit) views on 'the ideal candidate'. Aligning these views is essential and can, if well prepared, be done in one meeting. Preferably, the committee works together on the job profile and job description.

1c. Establishing the profile and competencies

When a colleague, let's call him Jan, leaves after ten years of service, it is tempting to take his old job description or ask him to describe his role. But then you risk unintentionally looking for a 'new Jan'. Therefore, always start with three core questions:

1. What tasks and responsibilities are associated with the role?
2. What competencies are needed to successfully perform these tasks?
3. What does the team need? What competencies or perspectives are currently lacking?

That last question is often forgotten, while it is essential for team development. Your team may need someone who speaks another language or someone who thinks differently from the rest – even if that doesn't fit the profile of the departing colleague.

Formulate selection criteria concretely, objectively, and observably. Avoid vague descriptions that leave room for interpretation. Focus on a maximum of 4 to 6 competencies. More can deter potential candidates and complicate objective assessment.

READ MORE: The competency guides of the Dutch Government ([open](#); Dutch) and Dutch universities ([open](#)) provide insight into various competencies.

The Ideal Employee Mold & Competency Valuation

Realise that each committee member probably has a different view of the ideal profile. Often, we are not even aware of what we are looking for. The same applies to the definitions of competencies.

Take 'networking skills' as an example. One committee member may see this as the ability to quickly build a network, while another wants the candidate to already have a network.

Structured assessment helps with this (see step 4).

Step 2: Vacancy and recruitment

2a. Drafting a vacancy

The vacancy text is the starting point of the application procedure and the business card of your organisation. A well-written text not only appeals but also does not unintentionally exclude anyone. Candidates from diverse backgrounds, such as women, people with disabilities, neurodivergent individuals, or cultural minorities, are more likely to drop out if they do not recognise themselves in the text or think they do not fit the organisation or the role.

Therefore, use the checklist below to recruit more inclusively.

Checklist inclusive vacancies

1. Write clearly, concretely, and concisely

- Use simple, direct language; avoid jargon or explain it.
- Keep paragraphs and bullet points short and clear (important for neurodivergent readers).
- Use active sentences and be to the point.

2. Limit the number of job requirements

- Focus on 4 to 6 core competencies.
- Distinguish between 'must-haves' and 'nice-to-haves'. Leave out the 'nice-to-haves'.
- Only ask for what is truly necessary – this prevents unnecessary exclusion.

3. Use gender-neutral language

- Avoid male or female stereotype terms.
- Use 'you' or 'the candidate' instead of 'he/she'.
- Be aware of gender-coded language and adjust the text if necessary.

4. Be culturally inclusive

- Avoid culture-specific references or humour.
- Formulate language requirements functionally: prefer “fluent in English” over “native English speaker”.
- Remove vague terms like “cultural fit” unless you explicitly state what you mean by it.

5. Write in an age-neutral manner

- Focus on skills instead of years of experience, unless it is truly necessary.
- Avoid terms like “young team”, “digital native” or “young at heart”.

6. Formulate with potential limitations in mind

- Avoid specific physical actions unless strictly necessary.
- Use words like “communicate” instead of “talk”.

7. Mention adjustment possibilities

- State that candidates can request adjustments in the process (such as extra time or alternative assessments).
- Be clear about the willingness to make reasonable adjustments in the workplace.

8. Check for bias

- Have the text reviewed (preferably by someone else or with an inclusion tool).
- Ask yourself for each requirement: is this functional, or does it unintentionally exclude a group?

9. Add a diversity statement

- Explicitly state that your team benefits from different perspectives.
- Make it clear that candidates are welcome, regardless of background, age, disability, or educational path.
- Ensure that visual materials (photos/videos) reflect diversity and are representative of the workplace.

TIP: Artificial intelligence can also help you create a more inclusive and clear vacancy text. However, always review it carefully with the checklist in hand!

2b. Determining communication channels

The reach of your vacancy determines who applies. Research shows that organisations that consciously use multiple recruitment channels attract a much more diverse pool of candidates than organisations that rely on one fixed route (such as LinkedIn or their own website). There are also recruitment agencies that specifically target underrepresented groups.

Always ask yourself: “Where does our target group look for vacancies?”

Tips for inclusive recruitment through channels:

- Use a mix of channels: LinkedIn, professional media, inclusive job boards, alumni networks, student associations, and social media.
- Consider collaborating with recruitment partners who effectively reach specific target groups (e.g., people with a migration background or with disabilities).
- Periodically evaluate the effectiveness and diversity of your channels.

2c. Using a Referral Programme

Referrals by your own employees can be effective: they reduce recruitment costs, shorten the 'time to hire', and increase the chances of successful placements. However, they also pose risks to diversity. People often refer acquaintances who usually resemble themselves, quickly leading to a monoculture.

How to make referrals more inclusive:

- Encourage employees to look beyond their immediate network, for example, to former classmates, previous colleagues, or people from other sectors.
- Encourage employees from underrepresented groups to make referrals.
- Explicitly communicate that diversity in referrals is desired.
- Monitor the demographic data of referral inflow versus other channels.
- Adjust if referrals mainly result in 'more of the same'.

Consider (temporarily) pausing the referral programme if it structurally hinders diversity.

Step 3: Getting to know candidates

3a. Choosing and using selection instruments

As a selection committee, you want to assess as accurately as possible whether a candidate fits the job profile. Various instruments can help with this, but not all instruments are equally reliable. Scientific research shows that structured interviews, case studies, and cognitive assessments have the highest predictive value for future performance. Other methods, such as the free interview, motivation letter, or references, are less reliable and prone to bias.

Use the table below as a guide when choosing the right instruments. We will discuss the CV, motivation letter, structured interviews, and work sample in more detail.

Instrument	Disadvantages & Risks	Predictive value	Recommendation
CV (see 3b)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prone to name, age, and education bias. Education/experience correlates limitedly with performance 	Low	Only use anonymously.
Motivation letter (see 3c)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Difficult to assess objectively due to style differences. Lack of comparability between candidates 	Low	Only used in standardised form with set questions.
Open interview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each candidate gets different questions. Prone to biases and first impressions. 	Low	Avoid using.
Structured interview (see 3d)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires preparation and training. Less room for improvisation Poor execution still leads to bias. 	High	Use, but prepare well and train people.
Work sample / case study (see 3e)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time investment for design and assessment. Risk of bias due to differences in prior knowledge. 	High	Highly recommended, when used with an assessment model.
Cognitive assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk of score differences between cultural and socio-economic groups. Long tests can deter candidates. 	High	Use when required, choose wisely and use non-verbal tests.
Personality questionnaire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lower reliability. Socially desirable response behaviour. 	Medium	Only use as supplement.
Situational judgement test	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective for behaviour-oriented roles, but quality varies greatly between tests. 	Medium/High (depending on design)	Can be valuable, provided well-validated.
References	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Often positively biased. Prone to bias and inconsistent. 	Low	Avoid or only as a supplement to hard data
Games & gamified tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Little long-term data. Low acceptance among certain candidates, risk of exclusion. Development and validation are complex. 	Unknown / not enough data	Only use after thorough validation and monitoring on fairness

READ MORE: The predictive value of selection instruments by Janneke Oostrom. ([Link](#); Dutch)

3b. Using CVs

CVs are a source of information but have a relatively low predictive value and can evoke biases. Therefore, the advice is to assess CVs anonymously. This involves removing all personal characteristics that do not indicate suitability – such as name, age, gender, nationality, or address. This helps to prevent unconscious biases.

Once you have made an initial selection, re-add the name. At that point, check whether the composition of the shortlist is sufficiently diverse.

TIP: Have HR anonymise the CV or use software for this.

TIP: Use a standard CV form without irrelevant topics.

3c. Using motivation letters

Motivation letters are a source of information but have a relatively low predictive value and are difficult to compare. Therefore, the advice is to structure motivation letters by having each candidate answer the same questions and link them to the assessment model (see step 4).

Example questions:

- What experiences make you suitable for this role?
- What would you like to learn or develop in this role?
- Why do you want to work for this organisation or in this team?

3d. Using structured interviews

A well-conducted structured interview is one of the most reliable instruments for predicting candidates' future performance. The STARR method is a proven and effective approach for this. This interview technique helps to map out concrete past behaviour and is a strong predictor of future behaviour.

STARR stands for: Situation, Task, Action, Result, and Reflection. By following these steps, you avoid vague answers and gain insight into the candidate's actual actions and learning ability.

Some interviewers are hesitant about structured interviews because they fear the conversation will feel unnatural or stiff. In practice, it turns out that – with a bit of practice – using STARR leads to smooth, meaningful conversations. You do not have to ask all sub-questions literally; let the flow of the conversation guide you. The most important thing is to always start with the same core question per competency.

By maintaining the same structure for all candidates, you increase comparability, reduce bias, and obtain richer, fairer information.

Step	Goal	Example Question
S: Situation	Discover the context in which the event occurred. Asking about the past reduces the chance of socially desirable answers.	“Can you give an example of a situation where...?”
T: Task	Gain insight into the candidate's specific responsibility. This prevents group answers like “we did...”	“What was your role in that situation?”
A: Action	Clarify what concrete behaviour the candidate showed.	“What exactly did you do?”
R: Result	Gain insight into the effect of the behaviour.	“What was the result of your action?”
R: Reflection	Understand how the candidate looks back on the situation and what they have learned from it.	“How do you look back on that?” / “What would you do differently now?”

Example STARR questions:

- Can you describe a situation where you got stuck while carrying out a task? How did you handle it?
- Mistakes are made where work is done. Imagine you make a wrong assessment and therefore make an unwise decision. How would you handle it?

- Some people are easier to get along with than others. Can you give an example of a situation where collaboration was difficult? How did you handle it? What was the outcome?
- In this role, you will supervise PhD students and university lecturers. Can you give an example of a situation where you successfully supervised people? What was your role/task? How did you approach it? What did you achieve?

3e. Using case studies or work samples

Case studies or work samples have a high predictive value because they closely resemble the tasks the candidate will perform. They also help the committee and the candidate to get a clear picture of the actual work. There are various case studies you can use. Sometimes the goal is to see how a candidate thinks, structures problems, or makes decisions in certain situations. But it can also be used to test proficiency in specific tasks.

Examples of work samples (*see also 3f*):

- Adjusting schedules based on different information sources in a limited time.
- Giving a presentation on a relevant topic.
- Writing or correcting a fictitious research proposal.
- Conversation with an actor as a patient.

3f. Combine techniques

It is advisable to combine different techniques to gather information about candidates. This means that you combine a structured interview, for example, with a work sample and a cognitive assessment. The table below contains three example processes:

- Management assistant
- Associate professor
- General Practitioner

Of course, you should link all the information in a structured way to the competencies and other job requirements from the profile. How to do this will be explained in step 4.

Three example processes

	Management assistant	Associate professor	General Practitioner ¹
Tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing schedules Answering emails Answering the phone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducting research Giving lectures Supervising students Managing people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Treating patients Running a practice Communicating with other doctors
Competencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning & organising Collaboration Accurate working Stress resistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coaching Result-oriented management Presenting Analytical skills Written communication skills Self-reflection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge & science Doctor-patient communication Collaboration Professionalism Social action Leadership
Selection procedure	<p>Round 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structured motivation letter <p>Round 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structured STARR interview Work sample: adjusting schedules based on different information sources in a limited time. 	<p>Round 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structured motivation letter Anonymous CV <p>Round 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structured STARR interview Work sample: Giving a mini-lecture on a relevant scientific topic Work sample: Writing or correcting a fictitious research proposal 	<p>Round 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structured motivation letter Anonymous CV, including a check on BIG registration <p>Round 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structured STARR interview National General Practice Knowledge Test Work sample: Conversation with an actor as a patient.

Step 4: Assessing & selecting

4a. Developing and using assessment models

When assessing candidates, it is not only important to score behaviour but also to understand how these scores are derived. An assessment model makes explicit what is meant by a high, average, or low score on a particular competency. This prevents assessors from using their own standards and helps make assessments more consistent and fairer.

Why are assessment models important?

- They ensure objectivity: everyone uses the same standard.
- They promote comparability between candidates and assessors.
- They make it easier to discuss and substantiate differences.
- They help new committee members quickly get up to speed.

Example competency "collaboration"

- **Score 5** = actively seeks alignment, identifies mutual interests, prevents conflicts.
- **Score 3** = responds adequately to requests, participates in meetings, but takes little initiative.
- **Score 1** = works mainly independently, avoids feedback, or rarely seeks alignment.

¹ We used the current procedure as a starting point. ([Selectie en plaatsing - Huisartsopleiding Nederland](https://www.huisartsopleiding.nl)).

Without such descriptions, there is a risk that one assessor considers "collaboration" mainly as social behaviour, while another focuses on substantive alignment. The assessment model makes this difference visible and prevents it.

4b. Structured individual scoring

To assess candidates fairly and objectively, it is essential that each committee member individually and systematically records and evaluates their observations. Use a standardised assessment form linked to the pre-established profile, desired competencies, and the assessment model. This prevents impressions or biases from unconsciously colouring the judgement.

The ORCWE method offers a step-by-step plan for completing the form.

Phase	What do you do?	Tips for application
Observe	During the interview, case study, or assessment, listen carefully and note down literally what the candidate says or does.	Use literal quotes or describe concrete actions; avoid interpretations like "enthusiastic".
Register	Write the observations immediately in the form, one observation per line.	Work with a tablet or pen and paper; avoid recalling later.
Classify	Link each observation to the correct competency.	Add a column number or colour code to the observation.
Evaluate	Give a score per competency and weigh the reliability (strong evidence? Weak evidence?).	Use an assessment model and fixed scale (e.g., 1 = insufficient to 5 = excellent) and describe why.
Evaluate	Only now form an overall judgement, optionally with a weighted average.	Check that no competency falls below the minimum level; apply exclusion criteria.

TIP: Take notes during the interview. We tend to remember what we think about a candidate, not what they actually say.

4c. Conducting the evaluation and decision-making discussion

Even in the group discussion, there are risks, particularly mutual influence. Therefore, it is important that committee members first complete their assessments independently and in writing before discussing them together.

Avoid group pressure and authority bias:

- Have committee members formulate their judgement individually before the discussion starts.
- Begin the discussion with the junior members; let seniors or leaders respond last.
- Encourage explicitly naming and testing subjective impressions against factual observations.
- Consider involving a neutral process facilitator or someone who offers counterarguments. They can help by asking reflective questions, such as:
 - "What is this conclusion based on?"
 - "What behaviour did you observe that supports this?"
 - "You are using different criteria for this candidate than for the previous one. Why is that?"

The chair ensures that this method is followed and that decision-making is transparent and substantiated.

Step 5: Evaluating

An inclusive and objective recruitment procedure does not end with the appointment of a candidate. The evaluation phase offers valuable insights into the quality, fairness, and effectiveness of the process. Organisations that systematically evaluate after each procedure not only strengthen their decision-making but also build a learning and transparent culture.

Why evaluate?

Good evaluation answers questions such as:

- Were the selection criteria applied as agreed?
- Did each candidate have equal opportunities?
- Where did (unconscious) biases still emerge?

Evaluation can be both quantitative (e.g., by analysing throughput rates per group) and qualitative (e.g., through reflection discussions with the selection committee).

What can you measure? Indicators & methods

To get a grip on the selection process, you can use the following indicators and tools.

Indicator	Examples of Measurement Methods
Diversity of the applicant pool	Compare demographic characteristics with those of the target group or society
Dropout per phase	Funnel analysis: which groups drop out at which stage of the process?
Objectivity of assessments	Analysis of score forms per assessor
Candidate experience	Anonymous feedback via short surveys
Application of selection criteria	Internal audits, discussion of assessment forms
Consistency between assessors	Comparison of scores per candidate or competency

From measuring to learning: secure insights through reporting

Without follow-up, evaluations remain isolated observations. By translating findings into concrete learning points and improvement actions, you make inclusive recruitment an ongoing process of improvement.

- **Internally:** Share insights within HR and with the selection committee. Discuss what worked well and what could be improved.
- **Externally:** Report annually (e.g., via a D&I monitor) on progress and approach. This contributes to transparency and public accountability.

Note: Reporting without reflection is pointless. It is not enough to note that only 10% of the hired candidates have a migration background. You must also ask the "why" question and link it to previously set goals.

Towards just recruitment & selection

The legal principle in recruitment, selection, and employment is: equal treatment, regardless of nationality, ethnic background, gender, etc. But in practice, it sometimes – despite equal treatment – fails in eliminating a disadvantaged position of a certain population group. For some organisations, it is a goal to work towards diverse teams or a more equitable world.

Diverse teams & equitable world

Diverse teams perform better, when there is also an inclusive culture. Especially when the organisation's stakeholders are also diverse. You can strive for a more equitable world, where you recognise that someone from a disadvantaged position may not have the 'standard' CV but does have the skills and potential to fulfil the role. We discuss two ways to create more diverse teams: valuing competencies & preferential policy.

More inclusive valuation of competencies

You can look inclusively at the qualities, knowledge, and skills that underrepresented candidates bring. This involves selecting competencies that enrich your team. You do this already in the design of the process.

Examples:

- **Multilingualism.** In many sectors, such as healthcare and public services, you deal with patients, clients, and citizens who do not have sufficient command of the Dutch language. This may involve people with a migration background and people whose first language is a regional language (such as Frisian or Limburgish) or Sign Language.
- **Perseverance.** People from a disadvantaged position often have a less impressive CV than people with many privileges. At the same time, they have often overcome a lot to get where they are. Therefore, you could see this form of perseverance as a competency.
- **Cultural sensitivity** and knowledge of different beliefs is something that people with a different cultural background often acquire at home. Value this competency.

Preferential policy

The law allows you to give preference to persons belonging to a minority group in the case of equal suitability of candidates. For four groups, you may, temporarily and well-substantiated, implement a preferential policy: women, people from an ethnic or cultural minority group, people with a disability or chronic illness, and age groups (provided as part of 'target group policy').

READ MORE: College for Human Rights on preferential policy. ([Link; Dutch](#))

From knowledge to action

This introduction provides a solid foundation to strengthen inclusive and objective selection in your organisation. But behavioural change requires more than just knowledge – it requires practice, reflection, and process improvement. We provide practical training for selection committees, HR professionals, and managers, where you learn how to recognise bias, assess behaviour, and structure each part of the process. Experience shows: training is effective when combined with process improvements and an inclusive culture.

Do you want to start improving your selection process immediately?

- Follow a training with your team or committee.
- Analyse your process: who applies? Who drops out? What can be improved? For which groups may your organisation implement a preferential policy?
- Improve the process, formats, and tools together.

We can help with these questions. Together we achieve your goals. Contact us for a conversation or visit our website.

Sources

There are many sources that can tell you more about inclusive recruitment & objective selection. Below is an initial overview.

Instructions, Tips & Guides for Inclusive Recruitment & Selection (Dutch)

- Toolkit Inclusieve werving & selectie van Erasmus Universiteit. [Link](#)
- Inclusieve werving & selectie, handreiking voor het MKB van de SER. [Link](#)
- Kennisplatform werven & selecteren van de SER. [Link](#)
- Divers werven & selecteren kennisdocument van de SER. [Link](#)
- Handleiding STARR gesprekken voor de huisartsenopleiding. [Link](#)

Articles and Reports on Equal Opportunities, Justice, and Effectiveness (Dutch)

- Kansengelijkheid in selectie & assessment door Janice Odijk et al. [Link](#)
- Niet klik, maar competentie doet ertoe door Hanneke Felten et al. [Link](#)
- De voorspellende waarde van selectie instrumenten door Janneke Oostrom. [Link](#)
- Voorkeursbeleid uitgelegd door het College voor rechten van de mens [Link](#)

Competency Guides

- Universities of the Netherlands [Link](#) (English)
- Dutch Government [Link](#) (Dutch)

About the authors



Janice Odijk, MSc is an occupational and organisational psychologist. She is a researcher at TNO and an expert in inclusive recruitment & selection. On behalf of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, she conducted research in collaboration with Erasmus University. This research formed the basis of the legislative proposal for equal opportunities in recruitment and selection.

For more information, see Janice's LinkedIn [profile](#), her LinkedIn [post](#), or the [research](#).



Lianne Mulder, PhD is a sociologist, postdoc researcher, and consultant. She specialises in reducing inequality of opportunity in the medical world. As a PhD candidate (Amsterdam UMC) and postdoctoral researcher (UMC Utrecht), she gained extensive experience with large-scale data analysis of selection processes in higher education, mapping the diversity among healthcare providers in the BIG register, and analysing the unequal opportunities for healthcare providers to specialise.

For more information, see Lianne's LinkedIn [profile](#), her [website](#), or the [visualisation of her PhD](#).



Rutger Legeland, MA is co-founder of Human Centric. He specialises in inclusive decision-making (strategy development, recruitment & selection) and social safety. As Deputy Head of Department at the Tax and Customs Administration/DF&A and as a consultant at Oliver Wyman, he gained extensive experience with, respectively, the STARR methodology and case studies. He now uses this experience as a trainer in inclusive and objective recruitment & selection at various organisations, including two universities.

For more information, see Rutger's LinkedIn [profile](#), [our website](#), or contact him via rutger@humancentric.nl or 06 53 84 53 39.